Jot & Tittle

No.171

A personal selection of Wessex, British Isles and world history.

"forgetting... is an essential factor in the creation of a nation and it is for this reason that the progress of historical studies often poses a threat to nationality," Ernest Renan (1823-1892)

This month J&T 171 looks at the King James' interference in Irish affairs in an episode of history we were never really taught at school.

THE FLIGHT OF THE EARLS[1]

If, like me, you have wondered what on earth caused the sectarian troubles in Northern Ireland, then this backstory explains quite a lot.

In 1607, early in the reign of King James I (and VI of Scotland), the most powerful Irish earls in the province of Ulster, namely Hugh O'Neill Earl of Tyrone and Rory O'Donnell 1st Earl of Tyrconnell, left Ireland, together with around 100 followers. Constant warfare with the English, hostile legal challenges from the English crown, even in peacetime, religious persecution from the protestant monarchy and fears of their impending arrest and execution proved too much for the earls who were already in precarious positions of power under English rule.

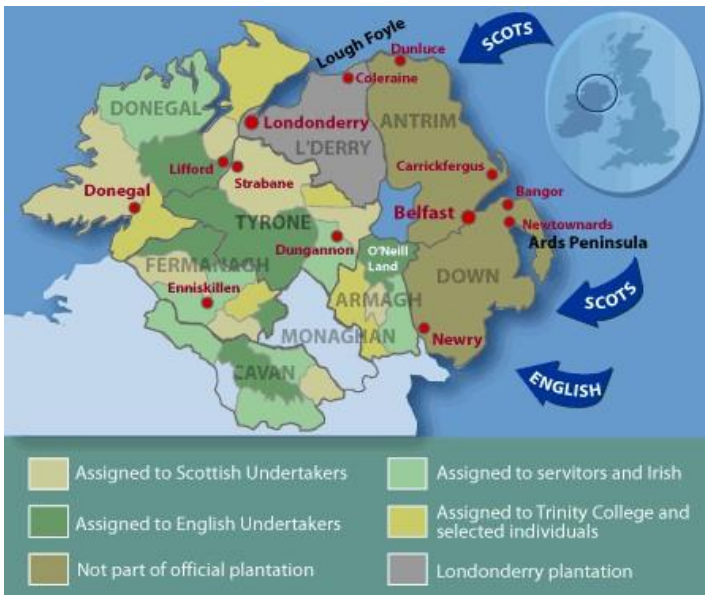
Their intention was to go to Habsburg Spain like many Irishmen before them. In Spain there were dedicated Irish neighbourhoods and the Spanish army had Irish regiments. These settlers were known as *Wild Geese*. In my own experience, a number of well-known Sherry bodegas were founded by the Irish, notably Garvey's and O'Neal's (in Spanish pronounced oh-knee-arlee). Unfortunately for the earls, Philip III was concerned not to upset the Treaty of London he had recently signed. They spent time in the Spanish Netherlands where they left their children to be educated and moved on to Rome where the Pope granted them a small pension. Tyrconnell died of a fever shortly after and Tyrone lasted until 1616, always planning to return.

Even by fleeing they could not escape their oppression, and their flight was declared treasonous by James and the earls' titles were forfeited. At last, James had the land he craved, but what to do with those troublesome catholic Irishmen who lived there?

THE PLANTATION OF ULSTER[2]

The solution to that question was to import a brand new, compliant and protestant population to supplant the existing one. This ambitious and despotic policy, even by modern standards is euphemistically called "The Plantation".

Since Tudor times the British had been gaining more of a hold on Ireland and especially Ulster. For the benefit of those who may not know, Ulster is the most northerly province of Ireland and comprises nine counties, six of which form today's Northern Ireland. Following the Flight of the Earls, the plantation programme accelerated under James I with both English and Lowland Scots being encouraged to become landlords and recruit their own tenants from the homeland. The idea was to place the land under those who were English speaking, loyal to the king and protestant. In part this was to drive a wedge between the Catholic Irish and the Catholic Highland Scots who were seen as a security risk at the time.



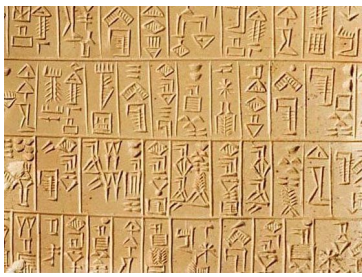
The official plantation was some half a million acres of arable land, the rest went to private owners but with the king's support. Derry was sponsored by the Corporation of London, hence it being renamed Londonderry. The remaining Catholic population of Ulster was understandably and inevitably hostile; there was a rebellion in 1641 and political unrest scarred the region up to and including the recent *Troubles*, (another euphemism for terrible sectarian violence). When the economy began to suffer, many Irish, of both denominations, emigrated to Glasgow taking their sectarianism with them. Even today there is religious division between the city's two football teams. Rangers' supporters are traditionally protestant and Celtic's are catholic. In addition, Glasgow can boast (if that's the right word) a large *Orange Order*. The Order is a protestant fraternal organisation based on local lodges. They hold annual marches which always increase sectarian tension, particularly when the routes often go deliberately through catholic neighbourhoods. The 'Orange' name is a tribute to William III who defeated the Jacobites at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The protestants are also Unionists whereas the Catholics tend to show loyalty to Dublin. Incidentally the *Red Hand* depicted in the Northern Ireland flag is an heraldic symbol that goes back to the O'Neill clan when their chief was 'king' of Ulster. You can see it on the picture of the mural.

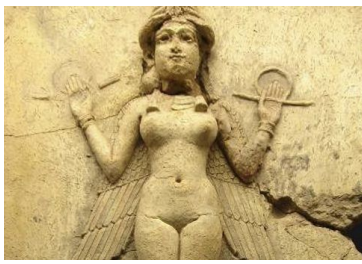
The relationship between Britain and Ireland has never been a friendly one. We in Great Britain have tended to play down our historical influence and as a result of poor education around the subject in our schools, we can find Northern Ireland's sectarianism baffling. But as we have seen this is a direct result of government policy in order to exert control. It divided a country religiously and economically and it has taken that region the following 400 years to try to heal the rift British interference has caused. One is reminded of Hosea 8:7 - *He who sows the wind reaps the whirlwind*.

THE FIRST AUTHORESS[3]

It is dangerous to talk about historical firsts as someone will inevitably unearth an earlier example. However, in this case we are going a long way back to before 2000 BCE when Sargon of Akkad conquered the Sumerian cities of the Fertile Crescent.

The king's daughter, Enheduanna was the *entu* (high) priestess of the moon god Nanna in the Sumerian city-state of Ur. A number of works in Sumerian literature, such as the *Exaltation of Inanna* and the *Sumerian Temple Hymns* feature her as the first-person narrator, and possibly their author. We know this from the tablets that have been unearthed similar to that on the right[4]. It is thought that her compositions were the models for prayers for centuries. As usual, there is a debate surrounding this claim as the only records we have were written 600 years later. In fact, Enheduanna herself was forgotten by history right up until 1927 when Sir Leonard Woolley discovered an alabaster disk in the remains of Ur that told us her name and her relation to Sargon as well as her profession.





Outside of the archaeological world, Enheduanna has understandably become something of a feminist icon as an early rhetorical theorist and the first known author in world literature.

STOCKHOLM SYNDROME?[5]

Cynthia Ann Parker, (1825 – 1871) was a girl who was captured, aged around nine, by a large Comanche war band during the Fort Parker 'massacre' in 1836, where several of her relatives were killed. She was taken with several of her family members, including her younger brother John Richard Parker. The others were soon released but Cynthia was later adopted into the tribe and had three children with chief Peta Nocona. She was with the Tenawa Comanche for twenty-five years. Her brother asked her to return but she refused saying that she loved her husband and children.

Three native Indians were captured by Texas Rangers who attacked a Comanche hunting camp near Pease River in 1860. During this raid, the Rangers killed an estimated six to twelve people, mostly women and children. They were surprised that one of their captives had blue eyes and she was later identified by Col Isaac Parker as his niece Cynthia Ann. Afterwards, Cynthia was taken back to her extended biological family against her will. For the remaining 10 years of her life, she mourned for her Comanche family (hence the short hair, left), and refused to adjust to white society. She escaped at least once but was recaptured and brought back. Unable to grasp how thoroughly she identified with the Comanche, the European-American settlers believed that she had been saved or redeemed by being returned to their society.

Heartbroken over her daughter's death from influenza and pneumonia, Parker died within seven years in 1871. Although initially buried in Anderson County, Texas, her remains were moved twice and are now in Fort Sill Cemetery in Oklahoma. Her son, Quanah Parker became the last free Comanche chief and the most influential Comanche leader of the reservation era.

THE TURKISH SURIANI

I recently read "From the Holy Mountain" by William Dalrymple (Flamingo 1998). In this book William is an adventurous and thoughtful travel writer in the mould of Patrick Leigh-Fermour, Bruce Chatwin and Eric Newby. He travels from Mount Athos in Thessalonika to Eastern Turkey and then down through Syria and Lebanon to Israel and Jordan visiting the Medieval monasteries that are still (just) in use. One story in the book stood out to me.

The poor Armenians had been subjected to periodic massacres by the Ottomans, who were fearful that they would one day try and claim independence. During the First World War, this culminated in all out genocide when around a million Armenians were sent on Death Marches to the Syrian desert. After the war, the Turkish Nationalists carried on with the Ethnic Cleansing and up to 200,000 women and children were forcibly converted to Islam. Turkish losses in the Balkan and First World Wars were blamed on Christians and the Armenians were a convenient scapegoat even though many had fought on the Turkish side. The first Republic of Armenia was declared in 1917 but the destruction of crops and a blockade by the Turks resulted in thousands of deaths. Not surprisingly, militant Armenians took revenge on the Muslim population whenever the opportunity arose.

At the same time another population was similarly targeted by the ruling powers, and they were the Suriani. They are Syriac Orthodox Christians who speak a form of Aramaic (the language of Jesus). In 1915, when their communities were being targeted for mass deportations, death marches and forced Islamization, one mountain village called Ein Wardo (modern day Gülgöze, photo[6]) fortified and stocked themselves with food and guns. Refugees arrived from miles around, often through secret tunnels. The advancing Ottoman army (backed by Kurdish militia) killed all those not quick enough to retreat to this stronghold. They then laid siege and tried to take it. It is estimated that at the start of the siege there were 7,000 people inside the village and 13,000 soldiers attacking. The military action lasted for 60 days with heavy casualties on both sides but ending with the Kurdish forces in full retreat. Even with the immediate threat dealt with, the wider threat remained, and the villagers of Ein Wardo held out for a further three years. All Suriani still in Turkey today are descended from those heroic villagers.

William Dalrymple managed a surreptitious visit to Ein Wardo and interviewed the last living survivor of that siege. Ominously, he noted then, that the church was being re-fortified.

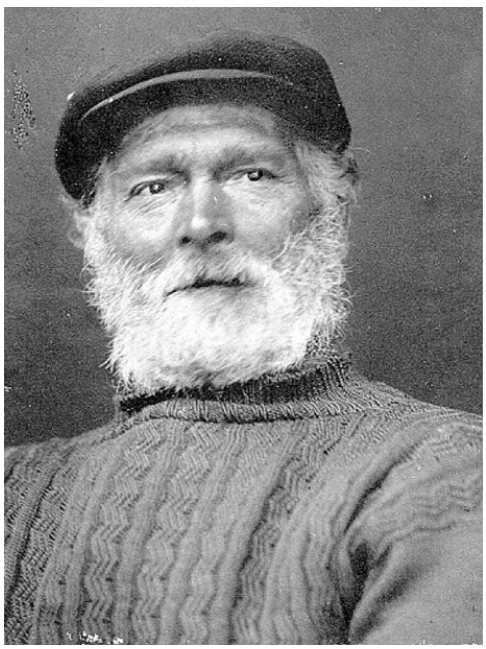
THE PATTERN OF LIFE[7]

A Cornish *Gansey*, sometimes referred to as a Guernsey, was a woollen sweater designed to keep out the weather, protecting the fishermen going bravely out to sea in the treacherous waters surrounding the British Isles. The designs, particularly in Cornwall, were memorised and handed down from mother to daughter and were specific to the fishing village where the jumper was made.

These local designs were recorded by Mary Wright in the 1970s. A knitting enthusiast who was commissioned to recreate a traditional Gansey jumper for the Royal Cornwall Show, Mary became an amateur historian as she pored through old photographs of fishermen to find the information needed to revive this traditional 200-year-old craft. The book resulting from this research, *Cornish Guernseys and Knit-frocks* (Polperro Heritage Press), contained 30 designs taken from old photographs, including nine individual designs from the small village of Polperro. Tina Barrett is another

enthusiast that helps keep this skill alive by still producing jumpers whilst photographer Lewis Harding who documented the village's knitting girls and women and the *knit-frocks* worn by its men and boys in the 19th century recorded for us the extremely hard life of these fishing families.

Knitted "in the round" (as one whole garment, without seams that might otherwise let the wind and spray in) with thin double-pointed needles, these jumpers harnessed the natural insulating properties and water-repellency of wool (so kept unwashed) and were commonly made of a highly twisted fiveply worsted yarn known as "seaman's iron". This particular knitting technique required a great deal of skill, and jumpers would be knitted using traditional rope, chains, nets and waves as the basis of their design. Often a more intricate design would be used for 'Sunday Best'.



Cornish girls would learn from a very young age so that they could contribute to the family's income, and the ganseys were usually knitted in procession. The youngest would knit the rib, older girls would knit the body and the mother would take on the more arduous task of knitting the pattern. The ladies would often sit outside in groups for the companionship and the better light.

They were a true working fisherman's garment – tight-fitting, comfortable, warm and durable, with special arm gussets for free movement when hauling in the day's catch, and a weave so tight it was practically waterproof. Ribbed at the bottom and stocking-stitched to halfway up, the patterned chest and upper back gave added warmth. When cuffs and elbows became worn, they would be unravelled back to the weak area and re-knitted. By 1970 fishermen had long replaced their ganseys with more modern woollies and waterproofs, but there was a growing interest in the UK for reviving traditional crafts.

Before the creation of the RNLI in 1824, fishermen of the day faced the very real prospect of being washed overboard with no chance of rescue. With designs unique to each Cornish village and fishing port, should the worst happen, a drowned sailor washed ashore could be identified by the pattern on his jumper and the body returned to their family.

MAKING CRIME PAY[8]

In 1699 *Tyburn Tickets* were issued for the conviction of criminals which gave the catcher exemption from parish duties. Later this was changed to a financial reward that could also be transferrable. This was made use of by unscrupulous *thief takers*. Joseph Nadin in Manchester did so well (not worrying if the victim was innocent or guilty) that he earned an official position where he could also demand protection money from brothel owners. He retired, a wealthy man with a large property portfolio. The two most notorious thief takers in London were Charles Hitchin and Jonathan Wild. Initially collaborators, they eventually became rivals. They not only kept the spoils from thieves that were prosecuted but leaned on minor thieves to hand over their 'swag'. They then attempted to sell the goods back to their rightful owners.

All this disorganised attitude to crime was the result of the law being based on a 13th century concept where householders were expected to police their own village. The novelist Henry Fielding and his younger half brother Sir John (Page 5), who was chief magistrate although blind, recruited ex thief takers and former constables and formed them into a rudimentary police force based on Bow Street magistrates court in London. In an effort to get rid of the thief-takers' negative image they paid them a guinea a week and called them the *Bow Street Runners*.

DID YOU KNOW?[9]

As the channel tunnel leaves England on its way to the Continent, it passes deep below the White Cliffs of Dover, and in particular beneath Shakespeare Cliff. The Bard was a regular visitor to Dover and in King Lear (Act IV Scene 6) he wrote 'There is a cliff whose high and bending head looks fearfully in the confined deep….Halfway down hangs one who gathers samphire, dreadful trade.' The construction of the Eurotunnel resulted in a 40 hectare area of reclaimed land in front of the cliff, now named Samphire Hoe.

Painting the town red is most likely an American expression from the 1870s but an enduring popular tale explains that in 1837 a rather inebriated group of huntsmen, lead by the Third Marquess of Waterford, who after a successful day's sport, rode through Melton Mowbray literally daubing buildings with red paint.


THE RT. HON.
W. H. SMITH, M. P.

The Clare family, whose estate covered much of Hambleden in the Chilterns, was succeeded by William Henry Smith (1792 – 1865). He took over a small newsagent in The Strand and formed the best newspaper delivery service in Britain using fast horses and carts to collect from Fleet Street and take them to the stagecoach stops. His son opened the first railway bookstall and soon W H Smith were the most famous newsagents in the world.

The poets Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge were related through their wives, who were sisters. Southey and Coleridge were both friends with Humphrey Davy and both recorded their experiences after trying his new invention nitrous oxide or Laughing Gas. Southey described his experience in poetic and effusive language, whereas Coleridge, who was more used to narcotics described the sensation in more precise terms. Coleridge is chiefly remembered for his masterworks "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan", and Southey, who was made Poet Laureate in 1813 (a post he would come to despise) is best remembered for writing the original version of Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Alwalton in Huntingdonshire was the home of one Henry Royce. He went to London to study, financing himself by delivering papers for W H Smith. He started a successful electrical business and soon bought himself a car although he felt that he could produce something much better himself. After his second model was produced a certain Charles Rolls came to visit and persuaded Henry that he too wanted the finest car in the world and could be trusted to sell them. The two formed a partnership, and the rest, as they say, is history.

1. Article based on Wikipedia with mural courtesy of the Peter Moloney Collection.
2. Article based on Wikipedia with map courtesy of BBC.
3. Partially from Wikipedia. Photo by Peter K Burian, Creative Commons. Originally from BBC TV series The Ascent of Woman. Portrait from article by Louise Pryke, Macquarie University, History Guild.
4. Schøyen Collection MS 3029. In the Public Domain.
5. With thanks to Wikipedia and Sky History.
6. Photo of Ein Wardo by Pepoeko, Creative Commons.
7. Article courtesy of Finisterre and Cornwall Live. Photos courtesy of Lloyds Register Foundation and the Baillie Gifford Prize.
8. Taken from Wikipedia, Texas State Historical Association and The Interesting Bits by Justin Pollard (John Murray 2007). Sir John Fielding courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.
9. With grateful thanks to I never Knew That About England by Christopher Win (Ebury Press 2005). Portrait of W H Smith MP courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.